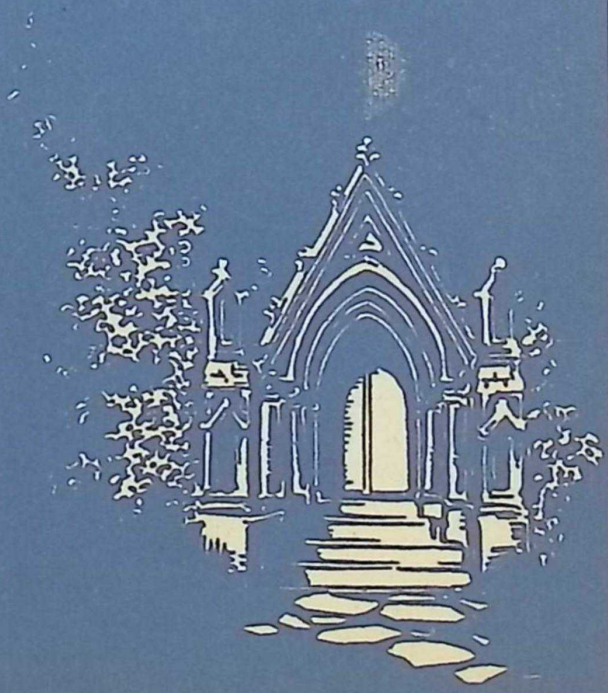
Why A Presbyterian Church?

McAfee and Porter

BX8932
.M22
1930

Why a Presbyterian Church



.10

Why a Presbyterian Church?

By

CLELAND B. MCAFEE

and

ELIOT PORTER

PHILADELPHIA
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

COPYRIGHT, 1930, BY THE

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

KP
30
M113

I

WHY A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH?

Why It Arose; What It Means To-Day

By ELIOT PORTER

1. Some brave chapters in history, in which Roman tyranny is replaced by a Church governed by elders elected by the people.

When the reformers broke away from Rome, most of them set up a representative form of church government by means of elders (*presbuteroi*, in Greek) elected by the people. Though Presbyterianism to-day means much more than this form of church government, that is its first meaning, and the significance of it involves some chapters of Reformation history of which Presbyterians are rightly proud.

a. *Calvin and Geneva.* The first act of the Reformation was dominated by Luther, huge, rough, volcanic, human. The second act was dominated by a slight, cold, brilliantly logical Frenchman named John Calvin. Turned from a study of the law by his discovery of the Scriptures, he found the voice of God thundering at him in the great letters of Paul. In 1533, sixteen years after Luther nailed up his famous theses, Calvin, at the age of twenty-four, broke with the Roman Church, and fled from Paris. Soon he wrote his famous "Institutes," in which he defined the reformed faith, basing it on Scripture and emphasizing the sovereignty of God. Passing through the Swiss city of Geneva he was commandeered to lead the reformation which was then sweeping the city. There Calvin spent his life. Pale, studious, tireless, undeterred by the fiercest hate, he preached, taught, wrote, founded schools—the first free schools in Europe—and set up a church government by elders elected by the people, which has since been the distinctive mark of Presbyterianism. "Calvin did three things for Geneva," says Principal Lindsay, "all of which went far beyond its walls. He gave its Church a trained ministry, its homes an educated people who could give a reason for their faith, and the whole city an heroic soul which enabled the little town to stand forth as the citadel and city of refuge for the oppressed Protestants of Europe." Just as little Sparta stood out against the tyranny of Persia, so Geneva, it has been said, stood out against the Catholic tyranny of Spain. Motley says, "To the Calvinists more than to any other class of men, the political liberties of Holland, England, and America are due."

In the spirit of that time Calvin sought to regulate the private conduct of the citizens, and was prosecuting witness

against Servetus, who was burned as a heretic. Yet Renan, French skeptic, called Calvin "the most Christian man of his century." He turned Geneva from a vicious, crime-cursed city to one of the most law-abiding and prosperous of Europe. From Geneva Calvin's influence on doctrine, church government, worship, and life, was carried, by the ministers he trained, to France, the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and America.[1] [2]

b. *France* for a time hovered on the verge of Protestantism, but swung back in the end to Catholicism. By 1560 there were over two thousand Protestant churches in France, all of Presbyterian type, for preachers trained under Calvin had had much influence. As they grew stronger, the Protestants, known as Huguenots (probably meaning "oath companions"), became involved in politics and even open warfare with the Catholics. In 1572 the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in Paris resulted in the killing throughout France of 50,000 of them. Through over two centuries of bitter persecution this French, Calvinistic Protestantism survived. More than four million Huguenots were lost to France by emigration, many of whom eventually came to Virginia and South Carolina. A small Reformed Church, Presbyterian in type, exists in France to-day, but the country is overwhelmingly Catholic.

c. *The Netherlands*, meantime, became Protestant and Presbyterian. Six years after Luther nailed up his theses two of his Dutch followers were burned at the stake. Bible translations fanned the spirit of reform, though death was the penalty for reading a Protestant book. The influence of Calvin became and remained dominant. The Inquisition sent thousands of Protestants to torture and death, and the Protestants on certain occasions retaliated in kind. The land was harried by Spanish armies; cities were besieged and inhabitants massacred. But a vigorous Protestant Presbyterian Church arose, survived, became dominant. To-day two great Reformed Churches, both Presbyterian, number as adherents nearly half the entire population of Holland. It was to the Dutch Reformed Church, Presbyterian in everything but name, that the first settlers of New York belonged.

d. *England.* When Luther's doctrines reached England, Henry VIII at first opposed them, but in 1534 he severed the

---

[1] In 1927 André Siegfried, French student of American life, told his countrymen that America is "not only Protestant, but essentially Calvinistic in her religion and social development."

[2] The Reformation produced two great branches of Churches, Lutheran and Reformed, the former holding that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are objectively present and actually partaken, the latter, following Calvin, that these are virtually present and spiritually partaken.

Church of England from Rome and declared himself its "head." Protestantism advanced under his successor, Edward VI. There followed a Roman Catholic reaction under Mary, in whose reign nearly three hundred Protestants were burned at the stake and many more fled to the Continent. Puritanism took its rise in part from the return of the Marian exiles, in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, with the Geneva Bible and the influence of Calvin and other Reformed theologians. Episcopacy had been retained in Anglicanism. Soon, however, questions of church government came into discussion and some able leaders advocated a Presbyterian reconstruction of the national Church by action of Parliament.

Queen Elizabeth and James I (1558-1625) both failed to suppress the Puritans. Finally Charles I found himself at war against the Long Parliament, overwhelmingly Puritan. This Parliament in 1643 called together the Westminster Assembly of Divines to advise it in matters of religion. Strongly Calvinistic, and eventually including some Scotch Presbyterians, the Assembly drew up a Directory of Worship, a Form of Church Government, a Confession of Faith, a Shorter and Larger Catechism. But Cromwell (Protector, 1653-1658) favored the Independent party and strongly opposed Presbyterianism. Charles II and James II (1660-1688) reestablished Episcopacy, persecuting Puritans and Presbyterians alike until toleration was assured by the accession of William and Mary in 1689. England since has been in the main Episcopal. The Presbyterian Church in England is small today, but rightly proud of the brilliance of its religious scholarship.

e. *Scotland*, meantime, went Presbyterian. Long sunk in the rankest ignorance and superstition, the country was stirred in 1528 by the burning of Patrick Hamilton, student under Luther, and in 1546 by the similar fate of the Protestant preacher, Wishart. John Knox, who for a time had carried a sword before Wishart to protect him, was chosen chaplain of a garrison of Protestant rebels. Captured with the garrison, Knox endured great hardship for a time while serving as a galley slave, but finally reached Geneva, where he lived for three years under the influence of Calvin. By 1559 he was back in Scotland again, preaching such sermons against Rome that the populace rose and stormed the churches and monasteries. In 1560 the Scottish Parliament abolished Catholicism and set up the first national Protestant Church, for which John Knox, with others, furnished the constitution and confession, both Calvinistic. For years Knox ruled Scotland from his Edinburgh pulpit. Intolerant he was, like most others of that fierce time, but fearless, utterly sincere, tremendously able. In the council

chamber at Holyrood he faced the beautiful young widow, Mary, Queen of Scots, and, because he would be neither charmed nor terrified, foiled her in her desire to turn Scotland back to Rome again. It was said of Knox at his burial that he "never flattered or feared any flesh." His name stands next to Calvin's in the history of Presbyterianism.

James I and Charles I (1603-1649), Episcopalians, failed to suppress Presbyterians in Scotland as they failed to suppress Puritans in England. But Charles II and James II (1660-1688) had thousands of Presbyterians hunted to death over the moors of Scotland. In this "killing time" Presbyterians became known as Covenanters, because they had taken oath to stand by one another and the Presbyterian faith even at the cost of torture or death. The Episcopal forms of the time seemed to them mere popery. When toleration came in 1689, Presbyterianism still predominated in Scotland, and has done so ever since. Various divisions rent the Church for nearly two centuries, but in 1929 the last two major divisions were united. To-day even the King of England becomes Presbyterian when he enters Scotland.

f. *Ireland* remained Catholic in the South, but the northern part became Presbyterian. The Irish refused to follow Henry VIII into the Church of England, and Elizabeth found them still obstinately Catholic. She virtually depopulated northern Ireland in suppressing Catholic rebellion there. This area James I (1603-1625) opened to Protestant settlement. Most of the settlers were "Scotch-Irish," that is, Scots who came to live in Ireland because of religious persecution in Scotland. But even in Ireland they suffered much, both from the attempt of Charles I to force on them the "Black Oath," in violation of their religious conscience, and also from massacres by the Catholics, which cost the lives of 100,000 Protestants. In 1689 came toleration. Between 1705 and 1775, severe famines in Ireland and certain religious discriminations drove 500,000 Scotch-Irish to America, where they formed the backbone of American Presbyterianism. The North of Ireland remains strongly Presbyterian to this day.

g. *America.* There were some Presbyterians in the early Puritan settlements in New England, but Congregationalism predominated. French Huguenots were early in South Carolina, Virginia, Florida. Dutch Presbyterians founded New York in 1623. From about 1680 onward the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians arrived, until in the last seventy years before the Revolution half a million of them poured into New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas. German immigrants to

Pennsylvania were largely of the German Reformed (Presbyterian) Church. The beginnings of American Presbyterianism were thus scattered and diverse.

In 1771 a number of Presbyterians in North Carolina gave their lives in resisting British rule. In 1775 some Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in North Carolina drew up the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. John Witherspoon, Presbyterian, was the only minister to sign the final Declaration of Independence the following year. Episcopalianism was naturally Tory, by its very status as part of the Established Church of England, though many leaders of the Revolution came from its membership. But Presbyterianism was almost solidly for the Revolution. The English even called the American Revolution "the Presbyterian Rebellion," and Horace Walpole said in Parliament that "Cousin America" had "run off with a Presbyterian parson." Bancroft says that the Revolution, so far as it was affected by religion, was a Presbyterian affair. According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, the loyalty of Presbyterians to the Revolution was "equalled by that of no other denomination." The Presbyterian plan of church government (presbyteries, synods, General Assembly) was virtually reproduced in the form of government of the United States (counties, states, nation).[3]

When deep feelings were stirred by the Civil War the Presbyterian Church divided and has continued divided ever since. The Southern Church, known as "The Presbyterian Church in the United States," had, in 1945, 580,369 members. Our own Church, whose official name is "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," had 2,161,872 members in 1945.

---

[3] Famous Presbyterians in American history include six Presidents: Jackson, Polk, Buchanan, Cleveland, Harrison (Benjamin), and Wilson; also Davy Crockett, Marcus Whitman, Commodore Perry, John Hay, Robert Fulton, Samuel F. B. Morse, Alexander Graham Bell, and Cyrus Field. John Eliot and David Brainerd were famous missionaries to the Indians. Rev. James Caldwell, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, took hymn books to Revolutionary soldiers to furnish needed wadding at the Battle of Springfield (1780), saying, "Give them Watts, boys!" Rev. Francis Makemie, "father of organized American Presbyterianism," was born in Ireland, educated in Scotland, organized churches in Maryland in 1683, later preached from New York to Georgia, suffered hardship, persecution, even imprisonment for preaching without governmental license. He organized the first American presbytery as early as 1705. The first General Assembly met in Philadelphia in 1789. Rev. Francis Doughty, in 1643, seems to have been the first Presbyterian to preach in New York City. He was compelled to flee by the enmity of Governor Stuyvesant, but became very influential in establishing Presbyterianism in the middle states.

[4] Other divisions in American Presbyterianism have been: Old Side —New Side, 1741-1758, over revival methods, and education of the ministry; Cumberland schism, 1810-1905, over freedom in interpreting the Confession, and education of the ministry; Old School —New School, 1837-1869, over intrusion of Congregational government and doctrine.

The small but influential United Presbyterian Church, which prefers psalms to hymns and sets the nation's record for benevolence, has about 247,000 members. The Reformed Church in America (Dutch), of which Theodore Roosevelt was a member, has 159,000 members. The Reformed Church in the United States (German) merged with the Synod of the Evangelical Church to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church of 920,000 members. Both are Presbyterian, except in name. In Canada a large number of the Presbyterians merged with the Methodists and Congregationalists in 1925 to form the United Church of Canada.[5]

h. *Other lands.* In Czechoslovakia there are more than 250,000 Czech Brethren (Presbyterian). They trace their origin back to the martyred reformer, Huss (died 1415). In Ukraine 1,100,000 people have left the Catholic Church to form a Presbyterian body. Magyar Reformed Church members number 1,130,000; German Reformed, 3,500,000; Swiss Presbyterians, 2,250,000. Vigorous Presbyterian churches exist in Wales, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa. In all the world there are about 29,000,000 Presbyterian and Reformed Church members.

2. Presbyterianism, then, involves a representative form of church government, by elders elected by the people.

Elders, together with apostles, governed the first Christian church (Acts 11:30; 15:2) and various churches in which Paul was interested (Acts 14:23; 20:17). A bishop (Greek, *episcopos*; literally, "overseer") appears to have been at first the same as an elder (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5-9). But before long, doubtless with good reason, a bishop came to be a superior official, first over a church, then over a group of churches, until in the end there were five great metropolitan bishops, then two above all others, and finally one, the bishop of Rome, that is, the

---

[5] Early dates in the history of American Presbyterianism:

1630 Rev. Richard Denton settled in Massachusetts.
1643 Rev. Francis Doughty held services in New York City.
1644 Mr. Denton, having left Massachusetts because of Congregational opposition, organized a Presbyterian congregation at Hampstead, Long Island, New York.
1658 Rev. Francis Doughty first conducted missionary labors in Maryland among Presbyterian Puritans who had been driven out of Virginia because of their refusal to conform to the Episcopal Church. The Puritans had settled in Virginia as early as 1614.
1683 Rev. Francis Makemie began work in Maryland.
1692 Presbyterian services began in Philadelphia.
1705 First recorded meeting of General Presbytery, Freehold, N. J.
1717 General Synod with four presbyteries organized in Philadelphia. Presbyterian Church established in New York City.
1789 The first General Assembly met in Philadelphia, May 24.

—*Adapted from "Manual of Presbyterian Law for Church Officers and Members," by Lewis Seymour Mudge and William P. Finney.*

pope. The result was religious tyranny and all the abuses which after many centuries gave rise to the Reformation. Calvin and the churches influenced by him went back to government by elders. Presbyterians prize the rights their history has given them, and think their system of church control both Scriptural and calculated to insure popular control, though they recognize that more important than these are a living faith, a Christlike spirit, and a sacrificial devotion to his cause.

The presiding officer at any Presbyterian meeting is called the "moderator." But he is merely a chairman, elected for a short time. Government remains in the hands of the elders. Presbyterians ordain two kinds of elders: (1) teaching elders, generally known as ministers or pastors (I Tim. 5:17); and (2) ruling elders, men elected by the members of the church from their own number, who, with the minister as their moderator, make up the session of the church and govern its affairs. The congregation of your church has chosen every minister (teaching elder) who ever served it as pastor, and every ruling elder (member of session) who ever had part in the direction of its affairs. Some denominations have democratic government, by congregational vote, as Congregationalists and Baptists. Presbyterianism is representative. Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal Churches are oligarchic, with rule by bishops. The Roman Church is monarchic.

"Elder" means literally "an older man." So does "alderman." But neither elders nor aldermen are elected on ground of mere age. An elder is elected to eldership for life, but is a member of the session of the particular church which elects him. Some churches keep their elders on the session for life; some elect them for a term of years, usually three; some of these last provide that an elder cannot be reëlected until one year after expiration of his term of office.

Elders appear in the Old Testament Church (Ex. 3:16; Num. 11:16), are mentioned frequently thereafter, and had ruled the local congregations or synagogues for some centuries when Jesus came to his ministry.

3. Presbyterianism means a close-knit Church.

The congregations are not independent. Each chooses its own minister, but its choice is subject to the approval of presbytery, and its minister and session are responsible to presbytery. Presbytery is a body made up of all the ministers and one elder from each church within a certain district. Presbytery has authority to inquire into the teaching or conduct of any minister who is a member of it, but it may also protect him from unjust treatment at the hands of the congregation he serves.

Larger in area than the presbytery is the synod, composed of ministers and ruling elders in equal numbers. A synod usually comprises a state-wide area. Larger still in area is the nation-wide General Assembly, which meets each year in May, and is composed of nearly a thousand commissioners, who are ministers and ruling elders elected in equal numbers by the presbyteries. Our Church in 1930 included 293 presbyteries and 46 synods. Complaints and appeals go from session to presbytery, to synod, to Assembly. By "overture" a proposal of change in policy or doctrine can be sent to the Assembly, which, if it approves, submits the overture to the vote of all the presbyteries.

Presbyterianism, then, "combines popular rights with supreme control." The need for the latter is causing more loosely organized Churches considerable concern. Says Dean Sperry, a Congregationalist: "I am betraying no secrets when I say that all is not well with Churches so organized. The denominational consciousness, to say nothing of catholic consciousness, is weak in the fellowship of such Churches, and their common tasks are prosecuted in spite of the intractability of single congregations. Sects with more centralized forms of church government are making more rapid headway."

Our Presbyterian form of government is neither decentralized, like that of the Congregational Church, nor highly centralized, like that of the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, and Methodist Episcopal Churches. Our concern to insure popular control has held us back from centralization. We have neither pope nor bishops. Authority is vested not in any individual, but in a body of men, the presbytery. The trouble is, of course, that responsibility for promotion and discipline cannot be definitely fixed on any particular person. To compensate for this weakness, executive secretaries are often employed for church extension work in large cities, and for national missions work in synods or presbyteries. Also a General Council for the entire denomination has been set up, with certain authority to act between sessions of the Assembly.

4. Presbyterianism has a creed.

Some denominations have none; but Presbyterian elders, ruling or teaching, accept at ordination the Westminster "Confession of Faith" as "the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." Those who sacrifice for the Presbyterian Church to-day can do so in confidence that it will not be captured to-

morrow by people with an entirely different purpose.[6] The only requirement for membership in the Presbyterian Church, however, is faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and public confession of that faith. The doctrines of the Presbyterian Church are set forth in a "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith," on pages xx and xxi of "The Hymnal," Revised.

5. Presbyterianism has maintained a high standard of education for the ministry.

Normally, a college education plus three years of professional training is necessary. This has cost the Presbyterian Church in America several schisms, and has made its rate of growth slower than that of many other Churches during the national expansion westward. Ministers for pioneer communities could not be furnished fast enough.[7]

6. Presbyterianism has favored an extremely simple form of worship.

Calvin developed at Geneva the plain, sermon-centered worship which has predominated in Reformed Churches ever since —Scripture, free prayer, the singing of psalms or hymns, preaching. Lutheran and Episcopal Churches retained more liturgy. There is a tendency to-day in Presbyterian and other Reformed Churches toward enrichment of worship.

7. Presbyterianism means a tolerant and brotherly spirit toward other Christian churches.

It has never believed that it alone possessed some essential element of faith or practice. Any Presbyterian church receives members of other evangelical churches just as it does members of other Presbyterian churches. To its Communion it welcomes all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and are sorry for their sins. Presbyterianism can logically take a leading part in the movement for church union, and this it has done and is doing.

In some greater Church of the future certain of its titles and forms may no longer appear. For each Church will have something to contribute to that greater Church and something to

---

[6] A young delegate at an interdenominational student convention was much opposed to the requirement of subscription to confession or creed by ministers or church officials, but on learning that another delegate did not believe in God, he was greatly incensed and wished to know how that delegate got into a religious convention. Was his position consistent?

[7] As everyone knows, more ministers' sons appear in "Who's Who in America," in proportion to the number of ministers, than sons of fathers in any other calling. A professor at the University of Indiana has found that, ranking the denominations in this regard, three stand far above the others: Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians.

gain from others. But Presbyterianism, surely, will contribute its belief in the possibility of combining popular rights with unified control, its positive faith, its catholic spirit.

II

WHY A PRESBYTERIAN?

The Outcome of Conversations with Intelligent Inquirers

By CLELAND B. McAFEE

The Presbyterian "family," all its various forms included, is the largest Protestant Christian group in the world under one form of government. Many reasons for their faith would be given by individuals in so large a body. But there are a few fundamental facts on which virtually all of them would agree. A pamphlet like this cannot say everything for anyone, but it may express some central facts for all.

1. Being a Presbyterian is one way of being a professed Christian.

It is more important to be known as a follower of Christ—a Christian—than to be known as a Presbyterian. "The name which is above every name" is dearer than any lesser designation. Presbyterians do not use it denominationally, since that might imply that they count others less truly "Christians" than themselves. While the Presbyterian Church tries to be to any Christian all that a Church can be, supplying spiritual needs completely so far as a Church can do so, yet it gladly associates itself with other evangelical bodies. All Presbyterians are professed Christians, yet they realize that not all Christians are Presbyterians. Hence, many Presbyterian branches urge organic union, or at least spiritual unity, with the whole body of Christ, with no thought of surrender of the essentials committed to them. They have no interest in compromise unions. When unions provide that each group shall make its full contribution to the whole, then Presbyterians can discuss them. Any coöperative or federated program among churches is apt to include the Presbyterians. It seems peculiarly Christian to work thus with other bodies of believers.

2. Being a Presbyterian puts one in a long, historic line of Christians.

Doubtless many join this particular Church because of their parents or other friends. It is a good reason when one is young, especially on simple terms of membership such as are used in this Church. Some continue as Presbyterians because they started so and there is no good reason for changing. But most

members of any Church outgrow this early reason. And, of course, many members not born in the Presbyterian line rejoice in it as truly as do hereditary Presbyterians.

Like all Christian Churches this Church traces its line back to Christ in all essential teachings and requirements. It is one of the "Reformed Churches." This does not mean that it had no existence until the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The great Christian saints and leaders of the early day belong to the entire Christian fellowship and the Presbyterian Church claims them all. Its members are in their line.

Also, the Presbyterian Church has a heroic history of its own, including men and women whose lives have made some of the finest records of the Christian faith. The line runs back to Geneva in Switzerland, to the Netherlands, to the Huguenots of France, to the Waldensians of Italy, but especially to Scotland and northern Ireland, where eloquent Christian witness was borne by consecrated Presbyterian men and women. Presbyterians are stirred by a family feeling when they read this heroic story and find themselves in direct line with such names. Early American history carries the same glory into the present day. The Apostle Paul said that he was "a citizen of no mean city." Presbyterians feel that they are descendants of no mean line. They glory in their heritage and most of them feel the challenge of it and would like to make their ancestors proud of them, as they themselves are proud of their ancestors.

3. Being a Presbyterian involves a blending of freedom and fellowship which is agreeable to the Christian spirit.

The Presbyterian Church holds a middle course between an individualism which prevents fellowship and a control which takes away freedom. As an organized body it claims authority, yet under that authority it safeguards the liberty of its members.

a. This appears in its attitude toward its creed. The typical Presbyterian creed is the Westminster Confession of Faith, a long document originating in the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and revised from time to time. This is the fullest single statement of the Christian faith proposed by any Church, and it marks this Church preëminently as "creedal" in type. Yet this creed is not proposed to inquirers as a test of membership. Anyone who can be a Christian can be a full member of the Presbyterian Church. The only condition of admittance is evidence of a real, personal relation to Christ as Saviour and Master, since this is the sole condition of beginning the Christian life. The ultimate authority in the Presbyterian Church

is the guiding Spirit of God, but his authority is expressed in its written form in the Bible. The teaching of the Bible is not arranged in any system, and the Westminster Confession of Faith is an effort to gather up its main teaching in systematic form. Such a Confession belongs to the more mature believer. Hence it is accepted by the ordained officials of the Church. Even for these the terms of subscription are kept wide, although utter sincerity is requisite. These ordained officers (ministers, elders, and deacons) must declare that they "receive and adopt the [Westminster] Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." In so large a Church and with so long a Confession of Faith there must be much freedom in interpretation and application, and yet if the fellowship is to be maintained there must be a wide field of sincere agreement among the subscribers. Presbyterians take pride in their creedal position. With wide variety they are yet fundamentally agreed. There is unity without uniformity.

The creed itself is part of the glory of the Church. No one can summarize it authoritatively, for it claims to express the rich and full faith of the Bible. But certainly it includes belief in: (1) the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; (2) the triune God—the sovereign and loving Father, the redeeming Christ, the sanctifying and comforting Holy Spirit; (3) the free and responsible nature of man and his ruined condition in sin; (4) the offer of a free and full salvation in the redemption of Christ; (5) the utter dependence of man upon the grace of God; (6) the giving of the whole life to the service of God; (7) the founding of a Church of believers; (8) the coming Kingdom of God; (9) the eternal life. Around these central assurances the Christian faith gathers, and the Presbyterian Church tries to express that faith. As with all great truths, anyone can grasp them and live by them; no one can fully state them or comprehend them. The essential unifying bond of the Presbyterian Church is the loyalty of its people to Christ, but next to that bond is the vital connection of its officers with one another in their subscription to the Confession of Faith, in which they find fellowship without loss of freedom.

b. Fellowship and freedom blend also in the Presbyterian form of church government. Though it is much older, it closely resembles that of the United States of America. It is representative, standing midway between a pure democracy, in which the gathered body determines everything, and an aristocracy, in which a small group make all decisions. All ministers in the Presbyterian Church are in one sense "bishops," but they are on a parity of authority, and so, in the usual sense of the word,

there are no bishops in this Church. At the same time, provision is made for leadership by those elected to responsible positions. The people have a voice in selecting all officials of the church; then they commit to these officials the details of church control. Each congregation elects its own officers—minister, elders, deacons, trustees—and these hold office at the will of the people. There is wide freedom of recall in the general practice of electing local church officers for three-year terms.

In this form of government the laity are prominent. In the session (purely a local court) the minister has no vote except such as a moderator would have in an emergency. All the other courts are made up of ministers and elders with equal rights and equal authority. An elder may become moderator or any other official of these upper courts. A Presbyterian minister is in no sense a "priest" beyond any other sincere Christian believer. The Church is not clerically governed without the laity. There is a system of complaints and appeals whereby the humblest member of any Church can protest against injustice or error until the highest court of the Church is reached and the mind of the entire body is expressed.

Two qualities endear this form of government to Presbyterians. For one thing, it is certainly Scriptural. Some think that it is required by Scripture and that a truly New Testament Church must have the qualities of this government. Many doubt whether any form of church government is really "required," but still believe that the system is approved by Scripture and expresses its spirit most completely. For those who make much of the Bible as the rule of practice, this is an important factor. Also, the Presbyterian form of government is pliable and can be adapted to needs as they arise. Anything necessary for the progress of the gospel can be made "constitutional" for Presbyterians. They add official forces, organize new agencies, prosecute new lines without hesitation, always under guidance of the fundamental principles of freedom and fellowship, loyalty to Christ and service of his gospel. Presbyterian groups can thus differ from each other in details while remaining loyally Presbyterian.

c. Freedom and fellowship blend also in the form of worship used by Presbyterians. There is no required order or ritual and the Church is not "liturgical." Yet any congregation is free to use ritual or liturgy if it desires to do so. There is a strong feeling that worship is at heart a personal relation between a soul and God and that any great formality or attempt at uniformity may hinder this intimate relation. At the same time it is evident that the Christian faith, like humanity itself,

has pronounced social aspects which are aided by a certain amount of form and ceremony.

The typical Presbyterian church is dignified and orderly. Its practice is somewhere between a stiff formalism and a loose disorder. It does not use cheap or unworthy hymns; there is no crude informality in the order of its worship. Its minister is trained by years in college and seminary. Within the wide bounds laid down by the Directory of Worship, each church is free to choose the form of worship which seems suited to the needs of its worshipers, but there is a prevailing type of prayer, praise, and preaching.

Within this order of worship is found the administration of the sacraments. The Presbyterian Church is typically Protestant in accrediting only two sacraments. Prevailingly it administers baptism by sprinkling, but it recognizes its administration by other modes. The Church makes much of the covenant relation of parents to God in behalf of their children and practices infant baptism as an expression of this relation. The symbolical character of the Lord's Supper is generally recognized, and many Presbyterians find it a distinctive channel of grace. How often and under what circumstances the ordinance may be observed is determined by the particular congregation and its officers. Neglect of it violates Presbyterian understanding of the wish of Christ, but the exact mode of its observance is not determined by the Presbyterian Church for any of its congregations. There is a prevailing uniformity but there is freedom in actual practice.

4. Being a Presbyterian connects one with a vast program of Christian service.

The missionary, educational, and philanthropic work of the Presbyterian Church in any one of its largest branches is world-wide. It has been spoken of as a college-building rather than a cathedral-building Church. Around the world there are many impressive Presbyterian church edifices which smaller churches might reckon as cathedrals, but these are not necessary to the full expression of Presbyterianism. What is necessary is the outreaching of strength to places and forms of need.

Presbyterian organization provides that each church member shall be a factor in world-wide service. There are "Boards" which supervise the work in which the whole Church is united, and the entire membership is included in their program. The most modest adherent extends his influence, through its missionary program, far beyond any ordinary range, touching the nation and the world helpfully at numerous points.

The educational program is equally rich. It covers the local church and the relation of its members to the Christian religion as well as to the outreaching of the Church to the world; it attempts to bring the Christian religion to bear upon life in educational institutions which cannot make independent provision for it, as in state colleges and universities; it maintains a large number of church colleges as part of its gift to the total need of the world and for the securing of a body of men and women in whose education religion is integral. Every Presbyterian has a place in this large program of education. The Church requires its ministers to meet a very high standard educationally and seeks to be an educational force wherever it has influence.

Much of the philanthropic work of Presbyterians is done without definite denominational connection, yet the Church as such stands beside its members in their widespread philanthropy. On mission fields it magnifies this aspect of Christian service, maintaining there institutions of philanthropy which are here more publicly maintained. In Christian lands such works are often connected with the name and life of the Church. Every Presbyterian is made part of this widespread ministry to human needs.

These four broad reasons for being a Presbyterian contain no single point reserved to this one Church. It is the combination of them and the balance in which they are held which constitute the peculiarity of Presbyterianism. They are held as natural expressions of the gospel of Christ and, of course, as part of the common stock of Christian believers. In the day of reunion of the Christian forces the Presbyterian Church will seek to contribute these elements to the reunited Church. For the sake of that coming time, and in full loyalty to the Christian faith, it urgently maintains its distinctive elements. This is no time for compromise or surrender. Indeed, such a time never comes in the Christian program. A rich and full creed, accenting the sovereignty of God and the utter dependence of man upon his grace, will be needed in the future. A government which provides freedom and yet maintains fellowship, which gives every believer his place in the guidance of the Church, will be needed. A devoted effort to obey to the full Christ's command to bear witness to him throughout the whole world will be needed. These elements the Presbyterian Church maintains earnestly and unqualifiedly. Its members count it an honor to serve so great an end, for the sake of that total Church which is the body of Christ.

THE LIBRARY
Union Theological Seminary
RICHMOND, VA.

THE RISE OF PRESBYTERIANISM

GERMANY	GENEVA	FRANCE	NETHERLANDS	ENGLAND	SCOTLAND	IRELAND	AMERICA
1517—Luther nails up theses against Rome: The Bible, Not the Church; Faith, Not Works.	1536—Calvin leads Genevan reformation, in church and city government. Banished but returns. Biblical theology and church government by elders. Schools.	Study of Scripture results in opposition to Rome's authority and return to salvation by faith. 1533—*John Calvin* turns Protestant, flees Paris, publishes his "Institutes" (theology based on Scripture). France stirred by preachers trained by Calvin at Geneva. 1560—Over 2,000 Protestant churches. (Presbyterian type). 1572—St. Bartholomew's Massacre, of 50,000 Protestants, fails to suppress Huguenots. Continued persecution for nearly two centuries. 4,000,000 Protestants lost to France by martyrdom and emigration. France becomes permanently Catholic. 500,000 adherents today of Reformed Church (Presbyterian) in France, which is largely Catholic.	1523—Two followers of Luther burned at stake. Translations of Bible fan spirit of reformation. Continued persecution. Calvin's influence turns Netherlands permanently to Presbyterian type of Protestantism. *Inquisition* puts thousands of Protestants to torture and death. 1559-1569—Protestant Church organized on Presbyterian basis. 1555-1584—William the Silent champions Protestantism. Netherlands become permanently Presbyterian. Puritan refugees from England arrive in Holland, finally go to America in 1620. Nearly half the population of Holland are today adherents of the Reformed Church (Presbyterian), which includes two denominations.	1376—*Wycliffe* exposes pope and Roman hierarchy. 1517—Luther's writings stir England. 1534—Henry VIII breaks with Rome, and heads the Church of England. 1553—"Bloody Mary," Catholic, persecutes Protestants (nearly 300 burned.) Many flee to Geneva, to return with Genevan Bibles and Calvinistic ideas. England reads the Bible. *The Puritans*, favoring reform of Episcopal Church, hold Calvinistic beliefs but favor congregational Church government. 1558-1603—Queen Elizabeth, Episcopal, fails to suppress Puritans. Some Presbyterianism alongside Puritanism. 1603-1625—James I, Episcopal, likewise fails to suppress Puritans. 1625-1649—Charles I fails similarly against Puritans. 1643-1649—*Westminster Assembly* of Divines, called by Puritan Parliament, creates Directory of Worship, Form of Government, Confession of Faith, Catechisms. *1648-1660—England is Presbyterian.* 1653-1658—*Cromwell*, Protector, a Puritan and Calvinist opposes Presbyterianism. 1660-1688—Charles II reestablishes Episcopacy. Charles II and James II persecute Puritans and Presbyterians. 1689—Toleration, on accession of William and Mary. A small English Presbyterian Church — 90,000 Presbyterian members, brilliant religious scholarship.	1528—Scotland, Catholic for 400 years, deep in ignorance and superstition, stirred by burning of Patrick Hamilton, student under Luther. 1546—*George Wishart*, protestant preacher, burned. *John Knox*, chaplain of Protestant rebels, captured, serves as a galley slave, then spends three years with Calvin at Geneva. 1559—Knox returns and rules Scotland from pulpit of St. Giles (Edinburgh.) Reformation sweeps Scotland. 1560—Scots Parliament establishes Presbyterianism as religion of Scotland. Scheme of national education. 1561—Knox defies Mary, Queen of Scots (Catholic). 1603-1625—James I fails to suppress Presbyterianism in favor of Episcopal Church. 1625-1649—Charles I fails similarly against Presbyterians. 1660-1688—"The killing time"—Presbyterian Covenanters hunted over moors by soldiers of Charles II and James II, who wished to enforce Episcopacy. Many who "covenanted" to stand by their faith martyred. 1689—Toleration on accession of William and Mary. Scottish Presbyterianism survives and predominates. 1712-1843—Many divisions in Presbyterian Church, mostly in protest against control by few large property owners. These finally appear as Free Church and United Presbyterian Church as distinguished from Church of Scotland (Presbyterian). 1900—Union of Free and United Presbyterian Churches. 1929—Union of Church of Scotland and United Free Church today.	1534—Ireland, Catholic, refuses to follow Henry VIII into Episcopacy. Eliabeth depopulates North Ireland in suppressing Catholic rebels against Episcopacy. James I opens North Ireland to Protestant settlers from England and Scotland. "The Scotch-Irish," Presbyterians oppressed under James I and Charles I, leave Scotland for North Ireland. Under Charles I these are persecuted for refusing "the Black Oath." 1641—Catholics massacre 100,000. 1642—Presbyterian Church organized. Persecution under Charles II and James II. Emigration to America. 1689—Toleration. 1705-1775—500,000 Scotch-Irish Presbyterians leave for America, driven by famines and religious discrimination. Over 100,000 Presbyterian members in North Ireland today.	1607—Jamestown settlement, Episcopal. 1620—Puritan refugees from England arrive from Holland at Plymouth. 1623—Dutch settle New York. Reformed (Presbyterian) Church. c. 1640—Rev. Francis Doughty flees from Governor Stuyvesant, New York. 1685—Ulster men, or Scotch-Irish (Scotch who have lived for a time in Ireland) arrive in New Jersey, Pennsylvania. Rev. Francis Makemie, "father of American Presbyterianism." 1705-1775—500,000 Scotch-Irish arrive in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Carolinas. German immigrants to Pennsylvania form German Reformed Church (Presbyterian). 1705-1706—First American Presbytery, Freehold, N. J. 1717—First American Synod, Philadelphia. 1726—Log College, Neshaminy, Pa. 1745—Old and New Side Division over revival methods and ministerial education standards. Reunited, 1758. 1747-1757—Early home missionaries. 1775—Mecklenburg Declaration by Scotch-Irish in North Carolina. 1776—Revolution begins. 1789—First General Assembly, Philadelphia. 1810—Cumberland Presbyterian Church secedes for creedal liberty and less education for ministry. 1837—Old and New School Divisions over Congregational influence.
Federation of Evangelical Churches—400,000 adherents							